

## **You're one cool cat, Steve Harrington by vikingtealight**

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**Summary:**

Upset about his break-up with Nancy, Steve gets drunk and befriends a cat.

## **You're one cool cat, Steve Harrington**

Steve Harrington is drunk.

He drank one, two, three, four, five beers. He counts them with his fingers and somehow finds six fingers sticking out.

Steve Harrington is cold.

His parents are gone, of course, but he still decided to drink outside by the pool instead of inside the house. *Because if you're drinking poolside, it's a party*, he had said to himself, two beers in. *A pity party*, he thinks now.

Steve Harrington is heartbroken.

He keeps thinking about how Nancy shotgunned a beer right over there, the night they got together. Or how in the summer they used to hang out by the pool nearly everyday.

He remembers how he threw her into the pool one day and she got him back six weeks later after he'd been lulled into a false sense of security. He had been fully clothed and eating a hot dog at the end-of-summer barbecue he had put together, when Nancy tackled him out of nowhere, dragging him into the pool with her. He can't remember ever feeling so happy and in love as when they surfaced and Nancy spit water in his face before saying, "Who's the ninja now?"

*Was I wrong to think she ever loved me?* he asks himself. *God, how far up your own ass do you have to be to see that your girlfriend doesn't love you?*

Steve Harrington is starting to realize that drinking beer outside in December is more pathetic than drinking alone in an empty house.

He picks up the lone remaining beer can and starts heading towards the back door when he hears a sound. The hair on his arms stands up. Every since he showed up at Jonathan Byers' house last year and found out that monsters were real, he's had a hard time not being on edge at the slightest unusual sound.

*The lights aren't flickering,* he reminds himself.

He tries listening harder.

*I left my bat in the car like an idiot.*

He stands up, ready to defend himself, although he wobbles a little from the sudden movement. As he walks towards the noise, he realizes how fucking screwed he is. He can barely fight demomonsters sober. He stands no chance right now. He thinks the noises are coming from the tree beside the fence. He counts to three and then forces himself to look up.

“Oh, for shit’s sake,” he says when he realizes the sound is the mewling of a stray cat, stuck in the tree.

The cat whines louder when Steve speaks.

“Okay, okay, calm down, I’ll come get you,” says Steve approaching the tree.

Steve’s grateful he used to climb this tree as a kid and knows all the handholds and footholds. Even then it’s not easy to pull himself up while drunk. He can feel the beer churning in his stomach and hopes he doesn’t vomit on the cat—or himself.

*Why does shit like this always happen to me?* He wonders as he closes the distance between himself and the cat.

“Okay, c’mere,” he says reaching an arm towards the cat.

The cat meows and Steve thinks she sounds angry, but at least she’s not hissing. He pets her head and she doesn’t back away. After a minute or so, Steve tries again to tuck her under his arm and this time she lets him.

“That’s a good boy,” says Steve, oblivious to the fact that this cat is a girl.

He struggles to climb down the tree while holding onto the cat, but

eventually the two of them make it safely back to the ground, and he carries her back to the lounge chair he had been sitting on. She rests happily in his arms, letting him pet her.

“Hm, you don’t have a collar,” says Steve. “Wait, do cats have collars or is it just dogs?”

The cat meows ambiguously in response.

“I’ve never had a cat or a dog,” says Steve. “My parents say they’re gone too much to take care of it, which is true. I mean, they’re gone too much to take care of their own son...”

Steve notices her hair is matted and she looks underfed. If she ever had a home, it’s long gone now.

“Anyway, I think you’re all alone, huh? That’s okay, I’m all alone too now that my girlfriend dumped me,” says Steve.

The cat lets out a loud meow and scratches Steve’s arm a little bit.

“Ouch, yeah, I know it sucks,” says Steve. “But I should’ve known. I should’ve seen how unhappy she was. Fuck, I did see how unhappy she was and I just told her to ignore it.”

Steve stops petting the cat as he becomes lost in snapshots of memories of his relationship with Nancy Wheeler. The good: the road

trip to Chicago over spring break; secret sleepovers on Saturday nights, followed by pancake breakfasts in their underwear on Sunday mornings; doodling matching tattoos on their ankles with sharpies, pinkie-promising to make them real when Nancy turned 18 even though they both knew they would chicken out. The bad: their first fight, screaming at each other in Steve's car in the school parking lot; when Steve said I love you and Nancy didn't say it back right away; at some point, the King Steve veneer wearing away, leaving Steve—just Steve—behind. And just Steve was never good enough.

“I should have learned by now that you can't make people love you just by loving them.”

The cat pushed against his hand, urging him to resume petting her.

“Okay, sorry,” says Steve. “You know there is one person I love who loves me back. This little shithead 12-year-old, Dustin. I helped him and his shithead friends fight some demodogs a couple weeks ago and now he keeps showing up at my house on Saturdays and asking me to meet him at the arcade with his friends after school.”

The cat jumps out of his arms, but he stays by the chair, walking in a circle around Steve's legs, leaving hair all over his pants.

“I act like I'm annoyed but Dustin's actually a pretty cool kid. He's the kind of kid I wish I hung out with when I was a middle school. Someone who gives a shit, you know? It's not easy to find that.”

He reaches for the cat and pulls her back into his arms.

“Oh, and you wanna hear how smart this kid is, Cat? We got McDonald’s the other day and as we were eating in my car, he told me about these things called tardigrades—wait, Cat, we should go get McDonald’s right now! Shit, I’m drunk, I can’t drive us to McDonald’s.”

Steve leaned his head against the cat, pouting for a few moments before perking back up.

“You’re a really good listener, Cat,” said Steve. “I like you. I can’t keep you though. I’m going off to college soon, buddy. I hope so, anyway. And they don’t let you have cats in dorm rooms.”

The cat let out a sad meow, and Steve has a great idea.

“I know, but I just realized I think I know a nice family that can take you in, little guy,” says Steve.

Steve rubs his face against the top of the cat’s head even though her fur is caked in dirt.

“You’re gonna love them and they’re going to love you,” says Steve. “You could be Mews Two... Two Mews. HA, you could be Tews!”

### **Author’s Note:**

I’m actually allergic to cats and I’ve never been around them, so I hope Tews acted like an actual cat

lol.

I'm [@thezoomermax](#) on tumblr!